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Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 12:13 PM
To: HSSframework
Subject: Chapter 5 History Framework Draft

Dear History-Social Science SMC Members:

Thank you for devoting your time and energy to revising the framework draft to help history and social studies teachers make history come alive for their students.

My primary interest is to alert you of historical facts of which you may be unaware, to ask you to consider their importance for 10th graders learning about the 1915 Armenian genocide during the Great War, and to inform you of an important document located in the manuscript division of the Library of Congress. It was sent to Secretary of State Robert Lansing by Henry Morgenthau, Sr., the American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913-1916.

The email attachment contains that historical document... a brief but powerful report detailing the history of the Armenian Question.

I thank you for your time.

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FROM AMBASSADOR MORGENTHAU'S PAPERS, REEL 22

**MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,
WASHINGTON, D.C. 29540**

HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

For the last six hundred years their history is a record of persecutions, a real martyrdom. No where else the abuse of brutal force has been so great as in Turkey. The conquered Christians have not had security of life, honor or property. Religious toleration has been practiced under most humiliating conditions. Churches should be small and not conspicuous; no bells should ring; a Moslem had a perfect right to stop a Christian on the street and cut his head off to see if his sword was sharp enough. A Christian should have an extra handkerchief to take the dust off the shoes of a Moslem at a signal.

It is only after second half of the 19th century, under pressure of the European countries, whose influence was growing- that the condition of Christians in the capital was improved; those living in the interior were and are still in the same insecure state.

As a result of this oppressive rule, the number of Armenians has greatly decreased.

Massacres: Thousands have been massacred periodically:

In 1896 (reign of Abdul Hamid) 300,000 perished by violent death, disease, hunger and exposure.

In 1909 (Young Turk Regime) 20,000 were massacred at Adana.

Thousands have been forced to become Moslems, and many have emigrated to Europe and America.

But the mass of the people have persisted to stay in their country and maintained, in spite of all persecutions, their national institutions, racial traditions, language and religion.

European Powers have principally taken interest in the Armenian Question since the last Russo-Turkish War (1878), when they obligated Turkey by Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin to introduce reforms in the Administration of the Armenian provinces.

The demands of the Armenians were most elementary: They wanted rights of security of life, honor, and property and equality before the law. They wanted the establishment of a regime of order and justice under European control, as experience had proved to them that the Turks would and could do nothing by themselves in the matter of reforms.

These simple rights have been denied them.

On account of political considerations and rivalry, the Great Powers have never been able to agree to force the Turks to fulfill the provisions of Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty.

Reasons of Persecution manifold:

1. Political 2. Economic 3. Social and Religious

Political:

The Turks have been unable to assimilate the Armenians. The latter are on a higher plane by their civilization and culture.

On account of the terrible sufferings they have endured, in spite of their loyalty and services to the State, they, the Armenians, have naturally turned their eyes to the European Christian Powers for help and deliverance. Turks have resented this bitterly and in order to avoid foreign interference-instead of following the wiser course of reforming their administration and thereby solve the problem at its roots- they have decided to annihilate the Armenian race and thus terminate the Armenian Question.

The Turks want Turkey for the Turks alone. Therefore by all imaginable means they have tried to exterminate the Armenians.

A misconceived, narrow, nationalism-combined with a fanaticism of the blindest and darkest kind- has been one of the chief causes of these unprecedented persecutions.

Economic: The Turks have been a warring race.

They left the Commercial field to the Christians and the Jews. They have had the army and the administration of the country in their control.

There are some merchants, artisans and agriculturists among them, but the vast majority of the Turks are public officials, soldiers and laborers.

The non-Moslems have become rich through commerce and industry, while the Turks, in spite of all the assistance they have received from the Government have made no progress in that line.

To show you how the Armenians control commerce and industry in Asia Minor, I will mention the following statistical facts regarding the province of Sivas, where the Armenian population is not so large as in some other vilayets.

- Of 153 factories in vilayet of Sivas, 130 belonged to Armenians, 20 to Turks.
- Number of workmen amounted to 17,000, of these 14,000 were Armenians.
- Of 316 merchants, 268 were Armenians, 36 Turks, and 12 Greeks.
- Of 37 bankers, 32 were Armenians and 5 Turks.

As the Turks could not overtake the Armenians, the Government would periodically organize massacres and hamper them all the time in order to check their progress.

Social and Religious:

Fanaticism. The masses of the Turkish people are in dense ignorance and fanaticism. The number of Turkish schools very limited. Armenians are unquestionably far more advanced in culture. They have their own schools which they run at their own expense, while the Turkish government schools are subsidized by the Government.

The Armenians (like all other non-Moslems in the country) pay taxes for public instruction but receive no support from the Government for their schools.

The Government does not favor the creation of new schools by the Christians, on the contrary they raise all sorts of difficulties to hamper and obstruct.

Just before the deportations there were:

785 Armenian schools in Turkey, with an attendance of 82,000 students, while there are only 150 Turkish schools, with an attendance of 17,000.

The Kurds do not have a single school.

This ignorance of the Turks, coupled with religious prejudices, has been another cause of disagreement between the Turks and the Armenians, and has rendered the masses of the Turks a ready tool of persecution in the hands of wicked leaders.

A Christian is never regarded by a Moslem as his equal. A Christian is considered as a raya, a serf, a subject, never a citizen enjoying equal rights. And when you consider that not only the ordinary people, but the rulers also think the same way, and that really there is not a single governor thoroughly prepared for his position, you would naturally expect nothing else but these lamentable results.

Recent Developments:

Present European War and its bearing on the Armenian Question.

The present party in power; its sympathy for the Germans growing out of their enmity to Russia.

While they were at war with the European Powers, they wanted to avail themselves of the opportunity to exterminate the Armenians while nobody could stop them. Political considerations prevented Germany and Austria from interfering with the atrocities committed by their Turkish ally.

The Turks claim that they had to resort to these stringent means for their safety as the Armenians were not loyal. But even supposing that the deportations were necessary, nothing can justify, as the Turks admit it themselves, the atrocious crimes which were committed.

Methods of Extermination:

1. Requisitions, goods taken without payment, resulting in economic ruin.
2. Confiscations
3. Forced exorbitant contributions and taxes
4. Searches in Armenian houses for arms, but in reality for pillage.
5. Bastinado, torture beyond imagination, too obscene to be related.
6. Forced conversion to Mohammedanism.

7. Massacres, partial and wholesale, women, children and old men and women not spared.
8. Deportations: Slow death, with all accompanying horrors on the way. No means of Transportation, had to walk on foot most of the way. En route attacks by bands of criminals especially liberated from prisons for that purpose. Women, young ladies violated daily, at each village on their way; many of them taken to harems; families separated; mothers threw themselves into river with their children to save themselves from shame.

No provisions made for food or shelter for these unfortunate people, many of whom are educated, and well-to-do people, who are not allowed to draw their own money from their bank as the Government had confiscated it together with their property as 'abandoned property'.

They sold their furniture at ridiculously low prices when they were ordered to leave their homes and start on a trip with an unknown destination. They sold pianos at \$5, cows at \$3. Even these moneys were stolen from them on the way.

There are bishops, doctors, lawyers, professors, journalists among them, dead, dying...Thousands have died of exhaustion, exposure, disease, want of food. Corpses of children were seen on roads by travelers.

Relief Work:

Americans have been the first and most important helpers. Interest of America purely humanitarian.

Missionaries have been foremost. Their sympathy towards Armenians very deep their whole work has been among them. Activities of Embassy, consulates, and Missionaries in distribution of funds and food among sufferers.

Money goes direct to its object; no expenses, New York philanthropist is paying expenses himself.

Present rupture of relations between America and Turkey has not affected work of relief. We have three distinct channels for transmission of relief funds, and have devoted and reliable workers on the field there for their distribution.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenians need immediate help. Latest telegrams received from Turkey and the Caucasus make strong appeals for continued help. No funds on hand, already overdrawn \$40,000 to give the poor people a morsel of bread.